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EDITOR R.PALME DUTT

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The Editor
May Day's Call

Eric Heffer MP
Chile's Peaceful Road to Socialism

Ernie Roberts
Trade Unions and the Labour Party

Sidney Weighell
Rail Workshops

Farm Workers Celebrate Centenary/Joan Maynard
Ireland/Betty Sinclair : Soviet TUC/P. Tempest

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LABOUR MONTHLY

Editor: R. Palme Dutt Associate Editor: R. Page Arnot

Managing Editor: Nicola Seyd

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Notes of the Month

MAY DAY'S INTERNATIONAL CALL

'Conference welcomes the Treaties between the German Federal Republic on the one hand and Poland and the Soviet Union on the other. It also welcomes the Four-Power Agreement on West Berlin and the agreement between the German Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic.
'It affirms that these Treaties with their acceptance of the post-war frontiers and the existence of two sovereign German States can form the basis for disarmament and co-existence in Europe.
'Conference calls on the British Government to give full support to the proposed meeting of European States with Canada and USA to consider ways of reaching these objectives.
'Conference agrees to carry out the unanimous appeal to affiliated organisations made by the International Co-operative Alliance Central Committee to popularise and support the proposal for such a European Conference.'

Resolution on European Security moved by the London Co-operative Society and unanimously adopted by the Co-operative Party Conference at Portsmouth, Easter 1972.

May 17, 1972

May Day this year sounds its call for unity of all working people in all countries, together with all who are striving for the aims of peace and human liberation, at a moment when far-reaching decisions are due to be taken which will govern the world's future for years ahead. The choice of paths is open. We have reached the turning point at the end of the immediate post-war era during which the not yet ended policies of the cold war and the arms race, of the attempts to impose military solutions and to translate the differences of social structure into the confrontation of opposing military camps have hindered co-operation and social advance. The bankruptcy of these policies of the old dying social order finds expression today in the manifest crisis of the capitalist world: mass unemployment, chronic inflation, retarded production, the conflict of currencies and intensified trade wars; the deepening gulf between the imperialist exploiting powers

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and the masses of the peoples exploited by them; and the reckless military adventures still being pursued to strangle the liberation struggle of the peoples. The socialist world, while immune from the economic crisis of the capitalist world, and continuously advancing, has its own problems of growth, as well as those arising from the contradictions and dangers of the present world situation. Will the lessons be learned in time to find successfully in the present phase the indispensable paths forward for the future of humanity? May Day 1972 presents this challenge with sharp urgency.

Towards New Beginnings

Today there are important positive signs that wide sections of people, from many varying political outlooks, have come to recognise the bankruptcy of the old policies of the cold war and are seeking to find a new basis of co-operation irrespective of differences of social structure. In Europe support of the majority of states, socialist and capitalist, for the aim of a European Security Conference, has become so great that no government dare openly oppose it, and those that are in fact opposed have to conceal their opposition under forms of demanding the fulfilment of an extensive array of prior conditions before the project can be considered, or raising procedural questions to make for delay. The treaties of the German Federal Republic with the Soviet Union and Poland, whose ratification is still the subject of a fierce internal battle in the West German political arena, express the attempt to move from the bankrupt, rigid cold-war policies of Adenauer and the Hallstein Doctrine, towards the conception of an Ostpolitik expressed by Chancellor Brandt. In Asia the victory of the independence of the people of Bangladesh is an historic advance, such that even the United States, which had played so shameful a role in supporting the previous butcher regime, has been finally compelled to become the fifty-fifth state to recognise their independence. At the same time the long-term treaties of friendship and co-operation between India and the Soviet Union, India and Bangladesh, and Bangladesh and the Soviet Union represent powerful bastions for the maintenance of collective peace in Asia. Despite the reckless intensified violence of the final military thrusts of the American imperialists, the long heroic struggle of the people of Vietnam, together with the peoples of Laos and Cambodia, is manifestly advancing ever closer to the victory of the aims of the people, who have confronted with such infinite endurance, sacrifice and creative initiative the most barbarous aggression since Nazism, and have shown their capacity to fight and defeat the most formidable military power of the imperialist world.

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Dangers in the Path

Nevertheless, in the midst of this advance, there is no room for illusions on the battles still to be faced. The balance of the world may be moving on the side of socialism and the peoples. But the gangster chieftains of the cold war and the Pentagon and Nato military headquarters are by no means ready to accept defeat. In Vietnam the reckless, desperate final thrusts of the losing American imperialists are resorting to every outrage and atrocity to seek to thwart the victorious advance of the Vietnam people and maintain the decomposing and detested puppet regime. Intensified bombardment has extended to resumption of bombing in the North, which had been suspended since 1968.

This intensification of American war measures in Vietnam, in place of the promised withdrawal, has had the most adverse effect on President Nixon's home electoral strategy, and this in turn has increased his desperation and the danger of that desperation. At the same time President Nixon has chosen this moment to repudiate the UN sanctions against any dealings with the racialist regime in Rhodesia and authorised the large-scale import of chrome from Rhodesia. Official Washington spokesmen have announced the decision to despatch 16 Phantom F4 fighter-bombers, valued at £58 million, to the military dictatorship in Greece. All this indicates that, alongside the current phrases about peace and a new turn in policy to renounce the excessive burdens of overseas commitments, the old firm is still very much in business. In this situation the impending visit of President Nixon to Moscow, and the serious negotiations which are due to be held, take on exceptional importance.

Britain as Bastion of Reaction

In any review of the danger elements in the present world situation it would be an error to under-estimate, because of the diminution of Britain's relative strength as a world power, the key role which British policy has pursued in the whole current era since the second world war (corresponding to its similar leadership of anti-Soviet intervention after the first world war), and indeed ever since the turning-point of the second world war in 1942, as the principal consistent planner and fomenter of the cold war. This role has developed from the days of the Churchill secret memorandum of 1942 and Fulton to the present day, when Home of Munich has inspired the opposition to the ratification of the peaceful treaties of co-operation of Federal Germany with the Soviet Union and Poland, and cast obstacles in the path of an East-West détente and a European

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Security Conference. The endeavours of Home and his associates to spread cold war hysteria failed to bring any change in the Ostpolitik of Brandt or the policy of France to promote economic and cultural co-operation with the Soviet Union.

Heath, Pompidou and Queen Elizabeth

This year the same basic policy, obstinately pursued by Heath, to sell out Britain in order to promote the aim of building up West European reaction and dividing Europe, has been carried further. This purpose has governed the key political reasons for defying popular opinion and surrendering the interests of the British people in order to enter the Common Market. The same basic purpose has found expression this year through the special courting of Pompidou by Heath in their loudly-publicised joint meetings (to be followed of course by a royal visit) which have been jubilantly acclaimed by French press comment as representing a triumph for Pompidou and French policy. Heath's own political objective in pursuing so ardently this aim of a so-called 'United Europe' (actually division of Europe) was unmistakably defined by him in his Panorama interview of January 24, when he declared that the 'United Europe' of his conception—by which of course he did not mean European unity, but a minority combination of ten capitalist European states out of the total of over thirty European states—would not be 'neutral' or a 'third force', but will be 'a power which stands for the things which Europe believes are important.' The same governing line to support the aims of reaction also outside Europe was given public demonstration when, at the height of the universal anger of world progressive opinion over the intensified American bombing of Vietnam, Queen Elizabeth was sent to Thailand to express greetings at the US B52 bomber base from which the bombardment was being launched.

Europe and Asia

'In a geo-political sense,' wrote the *New York Times* military commentator, Hansen Baldwin, in his book *Strategy for Tomorrow* two years ago, 'Europe is a peninsula of Asia.' This counterposing of Europe and Asia 'in a geo-political sense' is typical of the hundred current methods to confuse opinion on the real alignment in the world today. In reality the liberation battles of the peoples of Indo-China; the ever-extending constructive advance of socialism, not as an abstract dream of the future, but socialism in the real world, operating as an increasingly decisive world factor on the basis of the

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strength of the Soviet Union and associated socialist republics in Eastern Europe and exercising their strength in the common interests of the peoples of the whole world; the tenacious campaign of the peoples of Europe for a European Security Conference, reduction of armaments and a nuclear-free zone; the rising economic and political class battles of the working class now also in the leading Western capitalist countries; and the extending fight of the peoples of Southern Africa against racialist oppression and aggression: all these are varying forms and stages of the common struggle of the peoples of all countries, conducting their fight within the conditions of each country, but with increasing realisation of their common interests. Thus within the broad general aims of peace and peaceful co-existence between states irrespective of differences of social structure, the struggle of the people within each country necessarily goes forward, whether of a given nation to win or maintain national independence against aggression, or of the working people to pursue their social and political class aims. In this sense the decisive real alignment in the modern era, ever since 1917, and still more since 1945, is the alignment between the world of socialism and national liberation and the world of imperialist oppression and military adventures, neo-colonialist aggression and racialism. This, and not the false counter-posing of Europe and Asia, is the decisive alignment in the world today which governs the approach to a serious judgement of any particular situation in the light of this international understanding.

Against Needless Confusion

This real alignment in the world today is so manifest and decisive for the judgement of any particular situation that the fashionable press commentators and pundits of the ruling class organs in the modern capitalist world have to resort to all kinds of fanciful alternative constructions in order to confuse popular opinion from understanding the key issue of our epoch. Thus there is the familiar conventional picture of 'two super-powers' as supposedly 'converging' and becoming more and more similar in structure and character, from which the innocent traveller might expect to find in the Soviet Union a stock exchange, ten million unemployed and blighted racialist ghettoes in the centre of the big cities. Alternatively, there is the equally classless mathematical approach to world politics, to analyse the world political situation in terms of 'multi-polarity' of three, four or five world political centres. Then there is the geographical approach which counterposes 'the East' and 'the

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West', or 'the North' and 'the South', or 'the world village' and 'the world town', or the supposed shift of the main spheres of world politics to Asia and Africa, with Europe on the shelf and played out. All these one-sided constructions are often deliberately purveyed by their exponents to create confusion among the wide new sections, especially young people, who are seriously seeking to find their way in the jungle of world politics, and who are not prepared to accept the old routine conservative upholding of the *status quo*. For such an audience these elaborate confusions are presented with high-powered publicity from above as the 'newest', 'original' and even 'left' interpretations of the world in contrast to the old 'dogmatic Marxism'. Where these confusions spread some influence it is necessary to approach with sympathetic understanding the problems of all those who are seriously seeking their way, and to do everything to assist the reaching of political clarity.

Shift from Europe?

But these one-sided system-making confusions of the real alignment of the modern world situation are not only put forward by those who are deliberately seeking to confuse popular opinion from recognising the real alignment of our epoch and their part to play in it. They are also the characteristic outlook of many current political commentators aiming at an objective analysis. Thus the staid old *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* of February 24 could describe the prospect of five world powers in the future world political structure, and proceed to comment: 'Four of the five will be Asian powers. This shift in emphasis from Europe to Asia marks the real end of the second world war.' It is singularly inappropriate at this moment to describe the supposed 'shift' of the main arena of world politics from Europe to Asia, at the very time when the fight in Europe for a European Security Conference is in the forefront of world politics, and the outcome is likely to have a decisive influence on the whole world's future.

Europe's Future

Europe has been the breeding ground of the two world wars which have brought such devastation on mankind. The first appeared as the outcome of a preceding prolonged confrontation of two armed blocs, drawing in the main European powers, with an increasing burden of armaments and an arms race of hitherto unparalleled intensity, until it finally exploded into war. The second was directly launched by the expansionist aggression of fascism, and specifically German Nazism; but the step-by-step advance of this aggression to

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the final outcome in full European and eventual world war had only been made possible by the complicity of powerful financial and diplomatic circles in Britain, France and the United States. 1945 brought, at heavy cost, the victorious answer of the peoples to that aggression. But the victory was robbed of completion by the cold war policies to divide the alliance of the peoples, rebuild the monopolies which had backed Hitler and rearm Western Germany as part of a combination which once again turned Europe into a confrontation of opposing armed camps. Thus the victory has still to be completed. Great gains have been won. In place of the mainly fascist regimes in a series of countries in Eastern Europe there are now socialist republics. The weight of the Soviet Union and its consistent peace policy has been able to hold in check the earlier frenzied fantasies during the Truman-Dulles era of a quick third world war to roll back the frontiers of communism and occupy Moscow, and has made possible so far the prevention of a new war in Europe now for twenty-seven years, or a longer period than the twenty-one years between the first and second world wars.

Unfinished Business

But the work has still to be completed. There are still dangerous analogies with the conditions which led to both the preceding world wars. Europe is once again divided into two opposing military blocs with a heavy burden of armaments and mass arsenals of weapons possessing far more destructive power than any known before. And in Germany the revanchist forces of reaction and unconcealed expansionist aims, voiced by Strauss or Kiesinger, and now also by Barzel at the head of the Christian Democratic Union, are conducting a vehement campaign to topple the precarious majority for the Ostpolitik of Chancellor Brandt and prevent ratification of the treaties with the Soviet Union and with Poland. Reaction in the German Federal Republic and Toryism in Britain are working in close collaboration to hamper the ratification of the treaties which are the expression of the aim of a détente and peace in Europe. The cynical hostility to ratification of the treaties has received its most open expression in key influential organs in Britain. Under the heading 'No Treaties, No Tears', the *Economist* declared on March 1: 'If Herr Barzel stops the treaties with Russia being ratified, the loss will not be great.' Similarly the *Daily Telegraph* on March 4 in an editorial headed 'Ostpolitik Nonsense' declared:

> Herr Brandt's Ostpolitik, as embodied first and foremost in the treaty with

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> Moscow, was smuggled through furtively, under conditions of considerable secrecy so far as it concerned his main Western allies, Britain, France and America. There is much in it which they do not like from the point of view of the stability of Nato and the future course of German politics . . . they have not made their misgivings public. But to claim that they would regard failure of the treaty as damaging to East-West relations is a complete travesty.

Thus the fight is open. The crucial decisions which will govern the future are due to be made during these immediate coming months. The choice is narrow between the path of peace in Europe and the path which would prepare the conditions for a new war. The present battle for Europe's future is a battle which involves the whole future of the world.

Dilemmas of the American Colossus

If the crucial issues for the future of peace or war in the world are at this moment centred in Europe, with the question of ratification of the treaties which open the way to a peaceful development, the most formidable power of imperialism, which is also involved in Europe, the United States, is at this moment going through a critical stage. The American colossus, which during the initial years after 1945 played the role of a stabilising factor to rebuild the war-stricken capitalist powers as a satellite reactionary empire under American overlordship, has now itself become the main centre of instability in the capitalist world. The dollar has fallen from its primacy, with President Nixon signing on April 3 the enforced devaluation of its gold price, hitherto obstinately maintained without change since 1934, and even now still only a token devaluation so far of 8.57 per cent. The economy is racked by simultaneous inflation and mass unemployment. The internal political situation is characterised by sharp social and political divisions; revolt against colour and racial discrimination and denial of rights; advance of neo-fascist right-wing currents alongside the discontent of the people; and wide disillusionment with governmental policies, rising to great heights in the recent period over the whole record of the war in Vietnam, temporarily appeased in part with the promise of withdrawal, but now rising anew with the present 're-escalation'. In place of the brash confidence of 'the American Century' there has now developed wide questioning of the whole line of policy pursued since 1945.

President Nixon as Quick-Change Specialist

It is in these conditions of developing instability, equally of the domestic, economic and political set-up in the United States, and of

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questioning of previous assumptions of foreign policy, that President Nixon has operated since entering into office three years ago. He is no profound long-term political philosopher, but has shown himself throughout his variegated career a master in taking his colour from his immediate surroundings, quick to respond to the dominant current of the given moment and to bring out any device and expedient in rapid succession without too much regard for formal consistency. This characteristic has shown itself conspicuously in his successive contradictory attempts to tackle the obstinate complexities of the economic situation. He began by denouncing the budget deficit and inflation and proclaiming his determination to end it. Today he has raised the budget deficit to its highest level since the second world war, reaching $38.5 billion for 1972, as against the previous highest level of $12 billion under Eisenhower, $7.1 billion under Kennedy, and $25 billion in the last year of Lyndon Johnson. He proclaimed initially his absolute rejection of any control of prices and incomes or state intervention. When the results proved disastrous, he proceeded to impose an absolute freeze on prices and incomes (not of course on profits) for ninety days, and followed this up with a phase II of continuing restraint, which brought him into head-on collision with the far from left-inclined George Meany on behalf of the organised trade union movement of the AFL-CIO. These successive changes and reverses have shown themselves also in wider spheres of policy. He won his election as president with a pledge to end the war in Vietnam and bring the troops home by 1972. Today he is conducting the re-escalation of the war in Vietnam. It is against this background of various shifts of policy in many spheres, and successive devices and expedients to meet changing conditions, that can be seen the journey of President Nixon, jointly prepared on both sides with elaborate secrecy, and then presented to the world from both sides with the most high-powered publicity, to Peking to establish a basis of continuing relations between the US and the Chinese People's Republic.

President Nixon and Peking

The visit of President Nixon to Peking in the last week of February received at the time, and has continued to receive, abundant, but in essentials reticent, official publicity equally in the US and in China, and varied comment in all countries. President Nixon himself called it 'the week that changed the world'. However, he has a habit of using superlatives about any exploit with which he is associated. He described the Washington Monetary Agreement last December as

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'the most significant monetary agreement in the history of the world.' Today its failure to solve the problems is manifest to all. He was equally superlative in the days when he was the foremost China-baiter, denouncing People's China and Mao Tse-tung as the enemies of civilisation, and in the subsequent phase of his visit to Peking when he raised his glass to drink the health of Premier Chou En-lai and inserted in his speech a graceful quotation from the works of Chairman Mao. Nor was the apparent somersault necessarily so absolute a transformation of outlook as the unwary might imagine. But it is manifestly desirable to examine in an objective fashion the interests and aims of the participants in this dialogue and its prospective bearing on international relations.

Historic Long-Term Significance

Despite all the agility of President Nixon to seek to present his visit to Peking as a brilliant successful master-stroke, and despite the obvious aims of American policy to seek to take advantage of the new opportunities presented, and the special temporary problems associated with current policies of the leadership in China, this outcome represents in any long-range perspective an historic defeat for the policies pursued by American imperialism over the past twenty-two years. For twenty-two years the American rulers sought to isolate, boycott and overthrow the Chinese People's Republic. For twenty-two years they used their satellite voting majority in the United Nations to deny China its rightful place in international relations. They maintained their blockading navy against China, and banned trade. They financed, armed and equipped Chiang Kai-shek in Taiwan for the fantastic supposed aim of the invasion and conquest of the Chinese People's Republic. Throughout these twenty-two years the socialist world, the Soviet Union and all the socialist countries, the international communist and working class movement, and all progressive mankind have consistently fought this reactionary policy of American imperialism and conducted an untiring campaign for the international rights of the Chinese People's Republic. The final victory of this campaign and the conspicuous defeat of American imperialism was powerfully demonstrated at the session of the UN Assembly which at last recognised the rights of China, when the American imperialists still tried to salvage Chiang by presenting a 'two Chinas' policy to include both China and Chiang in the UN, and found themselves overwhelmingly defeated by a majority which even included governments formerly notorious as satellites of the

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US. Thus in the long-term perspective the defeat of the American imperialist boycott of China and the establishment of the international rights of China represents an historic victory for the progressive forces of mankind and the future of world socialism, irrespective of current short-term questions or differences. But in the short-term it is necessary to take account of the obvious aims of the revised strategy of American imperialism in seeking to establish its basis of contact with China, and the special questions arising from present trends of the leadership in China in relation to other socialist countries.

US Strategic Aims and China

The newly revealed Pentagon Papers have disclosed the text of a cable from President Lyndon Johnson to Ambassador Lodge in Saigon on March 20, 1964, in relation to the war in Vietnam, stating that 'We expect a show-down between the Chinese and Soviet Communist Parties soon, and action against the North will be more practicable after than before a show-down.' President Nixon's journey to Peking was not in fact such a sudden innovation in American policy as his dramatisation of it encouraged the innocent to imagine. The way had in fact been prepared by a series of unofficial contacts at various levels and preliminary steps, lifting of various trade bans, granting of travel permits and other administrative measures carried through ever since his inauguration. The *Washington Post* has since disclosed that already 'in the first years of the Eisenhower administration the President toyed with the idea of recognition, partly on the grounds that it might pull China away from the Soviet Union', and that in 1966 President Johnson nursed a similar idea with the object of putting a diplomatic seal on the withdrawal of the Chinese leaders from the international communist movement and the socialist camp. Thus the moves of the American imperialists to establish a basis of relations with the Chinese People's Republic date from the time when they were convinced that the leaders in China had moved towards a hostile attitude in relation to the Soviet Union and the majority of other socialist countries. It is precisely this strategic calculation that accounts for the jubilant enthusiasm with which the main forces of American finance-capital (with only the dissent of a few impenitent diehards) received the news of the Nixon visit to Peking:

> The change in the mood of American investors following President Nixon's

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> China visit has prepared Wall Street for what the wags are calling the 'Mao Tse-tung rally'. The convincing 20 per cent rise in Dow Industrials last week could be just the tonic Wall Street needs. (*Sunday Telegraph*, March 3, 1972)

The joy of Wall Street does not necessarily correspond to the interests of China as a socialist country.

China and the Socialist World

The internal development of the Chinese revolution, through all the successive changes and vicissitudes through which it has passed, alongside the high achievements of the Chinese people, however keen the attention of the peoples in all countries to this development, or however varied the opinions that may be expressed, is determined and can only be determined by the Chinese people. Similarly in the sphere of international relations each socialist country makes its own judgement in determining the development of particular contacts and exchanges which it may find useful in relations with countries of different social systems, including imperialist countries, or through international agencies like the United Nations, to promote peaceful co-operation and economic and cultural exchanges, alongside the necessary support for the liberation struggle of peoples subjected to imperialist aggression. But if a socialist country simultaneously develops its contacts and relations with the imperialist world, or with a particular imperialist power, and combines this with a line of public hostility to the majority of other socialist countries, then it is clear that such a line not only hinders the aims of co-operation of all socialist countries, but can be harmful to the vital interests of the socialist country concerned. We are not yet living in a world at peace after the victory of socialism and communism throughout the world, but are still in the jungle where imperialism attacks the weak, and the confrontation of imperialism and socialism is still measured in terms of strength, even while we strive to make effective the Leninist principle of peaceful co-existence of states with differing social systems. For this reason the words of Mao Tse-tung on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution have not lost their validity:

> After the October Revolution, the Government of any country, if it refuses to live in friendship with the Soviet Union, will merely do harm to the genuine interests of its people.
>
> (Mao Tse-tung, speech at the Jubilee Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, November 6, 1957.)

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These words have not lost their validity during the ensuing years. Many problems have arisen and remain to be solved. But we can maintain the confidence in their future solution which was expressed at the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the Report of Leonid Brezhnev when he declared:

> We are prepared in every way to help not only to normalise relations but also to restore neighbourliness and friendship between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China and express the confidence that this will eventually be achieved.

May Day's Call for Unity

In Britain the Liaison Committee for the Defence of the Trade Unions has called for massive support for a stoppage on May 1. There is no doubt that class confrontation in Britain has reached its most critical stage since the days of 1926. The Industrial Relations Act strikes at the foundations of trade unionism. In every field, economic, social and political, the offensive of the Tory Government and the employers is open, and the offensive is combined with attempts to split the working class movement. The fight to defeat this offensive, and to win the way forward for the aims of economic and social change, to bring down the Tory Government and open the way for a new kind of Government capable of rallying the masses of the working people against the monopolies, will require the unity in action of the fullest strength of the organised working class. May Day's call for militant unity is equally imperative on the level of the workshop and in every locality, as in the whole international arena for unity of the decisive forces of the peoples in the struggle against imperialism, reaction, racialism and war: unity of the socialist countries of the world; unity of the international working class; unity of all fighting in the cause of national liberation; unity of all striving for the aims of peace and socialism. In the words of Marx one hundred years ago:

> Let us recall the main principle of the International: solidarity. We shall achieve the great goal for which we are striving provided we firmly consolidate this life-giving principle among all workers in all countries.
>
> (Karl Marx, speech on the Hague Congress of the First International at the meeting following the Congress in Amsterdam, September 8, 1872.)

The words of Marx call to us today.

R.P.D.

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NATIONAL SOCIETY OF OPERATIVE PRINTERS GRAPHICAL AND MEDIA PERSONNEL (NATSOPA)

Fraternal Greetings on May Day to all Trade Unionists everywhere

R. W. Briginshaw
General Secretary

H. S. Lloyd
President

NATIONAL UNION OF MINEWORKERS
(Scottish Area)

Scottish Miners send May Day greetings to all people struggling for peace and socialism

MICHAEL McGAHEY, President
DAVID BOLTON, Vice-President
WILLIAM McLEAN, General Secretary

NATIONAL UNION OF SHEET METAL WORKERS, COPPERSMITHS AND HEATING AND DOMESTIC ENGINEERS

The Executive Committee greets all members and fellow trade unionists on this day, which annually affirms the resolution of all to work in unity for common aims.

L. W. Buck
General Secretary

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TRADE UNIONS AND THE LABOUR PARTY

Ernie Roberts*
Assistant General Secretary
AUEW Engineering Section

IN general elections in Great Britain, approximately 27 million voters turn out to register their votes, indicating that the vast majority of the population has some faith in the parliamentary machine. Of the 27 million, between twelve and fourteen million vote for Labour candidates, which suggests that a considerable proportion of the organised working class shares the belief that the parliamentary system is capable of 'delivering the goods'. Six million of the country's voters are trade unionists, affiliated through their trade unions to the national Labour Party and also to their local Constituency Labour Party.

It is therefore academic and unrealistic to ask whether the working class believes that it can achieve socialism by parliamentary means. It is equally unrealistic to talk of an 'alternative leadership' as if it were merely a case of installing revolutionary leaders in positions of power. The next Government will be a Labour Government—this is the only possible alternative at the present time. In view of these facts, what are genuine scientific socialists to do? It is up to trade unionists to see that the Labour Party is brought under the control of the working class through their trade union affiliations.

The Labour Party has the active support of some workers, and the passive support of many workers. The trade union movement, representing the working class, *is* the Labour Party—in the sense that trade unions breathe financial life into the Party, and exercise great—though not sufficient—control over it in the form of block votes. With all its deficiencies, the Labour Party is 'the political expression of the trade union movement'; and the trade unions, if they choose to do so, can exercise great political power, as well as economic power. All the faults of the Party, and its repeated failure to implement socialist policies, can be laid at the door of those who ought to control the Labour Party—the trade unions.

Where does power rest in controlling Party policy, for example? It rests with trade union block votes at the Annual Conference.

* Ernie Roberts writes here in his individual capacity.

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Yet frequently block votes are used unquestioningly in support of the National Executive, or of right-wing members of a Labour Government. Or, if the Annual Conference has taken a decision which conflicts with the views of either the Parliamentary Party or merely the Labour Cabinet, the Conference decision can be overridden with very little resistance from the trade union movement. The independence of the Parliamentary Party is the basis of the so-called 'constitutional relationship' between the mass party and the Parliamentary Labour Party, and as long as this 'constitutional relationship' exists and remains unchallenged, the control of the trade unions over Labour Party policy is only nominal.

Conference decisions must be made binding upon Labour leaders, and trade unionists must take action to see that this principle is established. In addition, rank-and-file members of trade unions must make certain that their delegates to the Labour Party Annual Conference use their block vote in accordance with the policy of their union's members, and do not simply use it to rubber-stamp the recommendations of the National Executive of the Party.

Where does power rest in choosing the leaders of the Labour Party? Indirectly, the choice is made by the electorate, who elect MPs, who are in turn responsible for the selection of the Party's leader and deputy leader. The Annual Conference delegates elect the treasurer and members of the Executive. There is equal need for the leader and deputy leader to be directly elected by the rank and file of the Party, too, and for all officers so elected to stand for re-election at Conference each year, which would make re-election a question of satisfactory service, rather than parliamentary loyalty, as at present. Trade unions control the decisions of Conference; they finance the Party and provide the bulk of its support throughout the country. It is right that they should have a substantial voice in deciding Party leadership.

Trade unions have a controlling interest in the national Labour Party, but all too often they neglect to use it wisely, in the cause of socialism. Likewise, trade unionists, through their branches, could exercise considerable influence within their local Constituency Party, particularly with regard to the selection of parliamentary candidates. Every affiliated trade union branch is entitled to its quota of delegates at selection conferences. If all trade union branches united in their efforts to get good working class candidates returned to parliament, the proportion of trade union members of parliament would be vastly increased, and the Labour Party would become even more 'the political expression of the trade union

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movement'. This could be done by electing the maximum number of delegates from each branch to selection conferences, and then by branches of different unions agreeing to support each other in the exhaustive ballot method (that is, if one trade union nominee is defeated, the votes of all the unions involved are then used in support of the remaining candidate). This would make the Parliamentary Labour Party more representative of the Party as a whole, and it is the only way to change the middle class nature of the Parliamentary Party. Local trade unionists have no right to complain if their MP turns out to be unsatisfactory, if they have not exercised their right to choose a suitable candidate at a selection conference—if, for example, they have sent only three delegates to the conference, when they were entitled to send three hundred!

Having selected a candidate, and then worked for his or her election, there is no guarantee that the constituency will be satisfied with its choice. In this event, the Party constitution makes provision for the removal of the MP at the end of his term, and his replacement by a new candidate. Constituency Parties must not be so bound by questions of 'loyalty' and 'unity' that they fail to use this provision, since it is their only real safeguard that their interests will be represented by their MP.

The relationship between the trade unions and the Labour Party is very often the weak relationship which Lenin described as 'control without power'. The 'control' of the trade unions was exposed as an illusion when union after union opposed entry to the Common Market, and yet permitted negotiations to continue between the Labour Government and the EEC, and agreed to a policy of 'entry on the right terms'. Lenin wrote:

> Control without power is an empty phrase. . . . What is control? If I write an order or a resolution, they will write one countermanding it. In order to be able to exercise control, one must have power. . . . And if I obscure this fundamental condition of control then I tell a lie and play into the hands of the capitalists and imperialists. 'Please control me, but I will have the guns. You be satisfied with control,' they say.

'Control without power' is only nominal control. This is the kind of control Labour Governments have been content with, since real power has remained in the hands of the capitalists, no matter what the colour of the government. This is the kind of control that the trade unions have been content with inside the Labour Party, since the Parliamentary Labour Party has carried out Conference decisions only so far as it has found them convenient, and the rest

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have been ignored. This has meant, among other things, that repeated demands by the trade unions for the public ownership of their industries have been swept under the carpet. It has meant, too, that those industries fortunate enough to have been brought under public ownership have been nationalised on terms completely at variance with those laid down at Party Conferences in the 1930s. It has meant that the trade unions came close to complete subjection to the Party which they created, in the form of *In Place of Strife*.

In Place of Strife was the final blow. Instead of turning the other cheek, trade unionists began to fight back, a fight which resulted in the withdrawal of the Labour Government's proposals for industrial relations legislation. This fight could prove to have been a turning point in the relationship between the Party and the unions.

Now is the time for the working class, through their unions, to increase their political understanding, move into the Constituency Labour Parties, and, with the individual members of the Labour Party, *take control* of Party organisation, *elect* officers annually (including leader, deputy leader, and general secretary), *select* working class socialist candidates for local and national elections, instead of professional politicians.

If these things are done, the trade unions can play a leading role in the creation of a socialist party in which the delegates to the Annual Conference, the National Executive Committee, the Parliamentary Labour Party and the Party leadership will be united in their efforts to destroy the present capitalist society and replace it with a socialist one.

LABOUR MONTHLY FIFTY YEARS AGO

Some Englishmen state that they took, and they hold, India by the sword. Both these statements are wrong. The sword is entirely useless for holding India. We alone keep them. Napoleon is said to have described the English as a nation of shopkeepers. It is a fitting description. They hold whatever dominions they have for the sake of their commerce. Their army and their navy are intended to protect it. When the Transvaal offered no such attractions, the late Mr Gladstone discovered that it was not right for the English to hold it. When it became a paying proposition, resistance led to war. Mr Chamberlain soon discovered that England enjoyed a suzerainty over the Transvaal. It is related that someone asked the late President Kruger whether there was gold in the moon? He replied that it was highly unlikely, because, if there were, the English would have annexed it.

(From 'Britain, India and Swaraj',
by M. K. Gandhi, *Labour Monthly*, May 1922)

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CHILE'S PEACEFUL ROAD TO SOCIALISM

Eric S. Heffer MP

DURING a recent parliamentary visit to Chile, I together with other MPs had an opportunity of discussing with Chilean political leaders of varying schools of opinion the problems of that country and the Chilean way to socialism.

We had discussions with President Allende, the Foreign Secretary, Communist Party Senators and Deputies, Radical Party leaders, as well as with opposition politicians from the Christian Democrats and the National Party. There is no doubt, that the Popular Unity Government led by President Allende is under great pressure from both internal and external reactionaries. They will require to keep their nerve and increasingly to rely upon their mass support amongst the Chilean working class and the peasantry. The task that Popular Unity has set itself is not easy. They are seeking to transform Chile into a socialist country by democratic parliamentary means. They are therefore being combated by every parliamentary device, as well as suffering threats of violence from neo-fascist and ultra-right-wing groups.

The historical objectives of the Popular Unity Government (supported as it is by eight left-wing political parties) are set out in the Popular Unity programme placed before the Chilean people in the Presidential election of 1970. I will quote just two sections. The programme says:

> The revolutionary and popular forces have not united simply to fight for the substitution of one President of the Republic by another, nor to replace one party by others in Government but, rather, to carry out profound changes which are required by national circumstances, based on the transfer of power from the old dominant group to the workers, rural population and progressive sectors of the urban and rural middle classes....
>
> As regards the political structure, the Popular Government has the double task of (1) preserving and making more effective and real the democratic rights and achievements of the working class; and (2) transforming present institutions in order to install a new system of power in which the working class and the people are the ones who really exercise power.

Popular Unity proposes that there should be three sectors of the economy: the socially owned sector, the mixed sector, and the

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private sector. The proposals for the publicly owned sector are:

1. The nationalisation of the large-scale copper, nitrate, iodine, iron and coal mines.
2. The nationalisation of the country's financial system, especially private banks and insurance companies.
3. The nationalisation of foreign trade.
4. The nationalisation of the large distribution firms and monopolies.
5. Public ownership of the strategic industrial monopolies.
6. All those industries which have a strong influence on the nation's social and economic development such as the production and distribution of electric power, rail, air and sea transport, communication, the production, refining and distribution of petroleum and its by-products including liquid gas, the iron and steel industry, cement, petro-chemicals and heavy chemicals, cellulose and paper.

That is a very comprehensive list and obviously includes the commanding heights of industry. Naturally, the entrenched forces of reaction, are not prepared to allow full socialisation without a struggle. No ruling class anywhere in the world are going to give up their power without a struggle, especially if they are backed by powerful outside capitalist forces, and Chile is no exception.

The copper mines were nationalised fairly easily. Even the previous Christian Democrat Frei Government had promised to do it, but had been half-hearted about it. Nationalisation of copper, was done with very little compensation. The big American companies had extracted enormous profit, and the Chilean people were being bled white as a result. Even the ultra-right National Party could put up no real defence for the US companies.

The Popular Unity Government also extended public ownership in other directions. They did this by using a law, introduced during the short-lived regime of the Marmaduke Groves of the 1930s. Therefore it was done through the Presidency by administrative means. Also the agrarian reform programme has been stepped up. In eighteen months, Popular Unity has expropriated over 1,300 landed estates, as many as the Frei Government did during its six years in office. The interesting thing is that agricultural production increased by 5.2 per cent during 1971. This is almost double the growth rate under Frei.

To stimulate growth in the economy, the Government allowed workers' wages to increase between 45 per cent to 50 per cent. This increase in the purchasing power of the workers has led to a consumer boom. This has meant a fall in unemployment from 8.3 per cent in December 1970 to 4.7 per cent in September 1971. Unemployment has continued to fall since that date also.

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The Government has made mistakes, and errors of sectarianism have been committed at lower levels. After 15 months, the National Committee of Popular Unity met, and later issued the *El Arrayen* report. The report said:

> We propose to eradicate sectarianism which finds expression in relations between the parties of the Popular Unity themselves, and which obstructs the basis of common work and leads to harmful forms of competition in the recruitment of members or attempts to divide sectors of the public administration, enterprises in the same area of public ownership or spheres of influence....

The report was a milestone in the progress of the Popular Unity Government. It was essential that a revolutionary socialist Government should correct its errors. If it fails to do so, it loses popular support, and in Chilean conditions that is quickly seized upon by those whose one aim is to bring down the Government.

Chile has a Presidential system. The President forms the Government, and he is elected at a different time to the two Houses of Congress, i.e. the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. Unfortunately Congressional elections were held before Allende became President. Therefore he took over without a majority for Popular Unity in either House. Popular Unity is made up of the Chilean Socialist Party, the Chilean Communist Party, the Radical Party (affiliated to the Socialist International), the Action Popular Party, the Socialist Popular Party, the Left Christian Party, the Social Democratic Party and MAPU (also left Christian).

The Left-Radical Party (which is really the right wing of the Radicals) did support Popular Unity but has now left the coalition and has gone into opposition.

The opposition parties are the Christian Democrat Party, the Democratic Radical Party and the National Party.

In the Senate, the Government, until the defection of the Left-Radicals, had 23 Senators, and the opposition had 27. In the Chamber of Deputies the Congressmen supporting Popular Unity were 66, and the opposition had 84.

The opposition on February 15 passed constitutional amendments which said that in future no further nationalisation should take place without the consent of the two houses of Congress. President Allende has vetoed the legislation of the Congress. It has been returned to the Congress. If they reject the veto, which is most likely, then there is a constitutional crisis of great magnitude. The Popular Unity, had hoped that the issue could have been resolved

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by a Constitutional Commission. During the period of the 60 days that the President considered the constitutional amendments, it had been hoped that by negotiation an agreement could have been reached with the Christian Democrats. After all, much of the programme of Senator Tomic, the Christian Democrat Presidential candidate in 1970, had been similar to the programme of Popular Unity. However, the Christian Democrats have moved increasingly to the right. They slammed the door shut. The President can put the issue to the people in a plebiscite. However, under Chilean law this can only be done once by a President in his six years, and it may be that at this stage it would be the wrong tactic.

The Government is therefore in a great difficulty. The press is divided and some of the most powerful organs are owned by the Edwards family which is dedicated to the capitalist system. Papers like *El Mercurio* are conducting a scurrilous campaign against the Government and President Allende in particular. Every minor issue is blown up out of all recognition to its importance. Actually it reminded me of the *Daily Express* during a Labour Government in office in Britain, only worse. The opposition newspapers are as follows. *El Mercurio* (so called independent), *La Prensa* (right-wing Christian Democrat), *La Tercera* (right-wing Radical), *Las Ultimas Noticias* (owned by *El Mercurio*), *La Segunda* (owned by *El Mercurio*) and *La Tribuna* (owned by the National Party). The Government press is *La Nacion* (Government owned), *El Seglio* (owned by the Communist Party), *Clarin* (left-wing), *Las Noticias de Ultima Hora* (socialist owned), *Puro Chile* (Communist Party).

Despite the howls from the right-wing papers, the press is absolutely free. Journalists can write what they like, subject only to the laws of libel.

Chile is still a bourgeois democracy. The reforms of a fundamental kind proposed by Popular Unity have not yet all been put into operation. There is a danger from the neo-fascist elements. The army, air force and navy, have remained in support of the elected Government. It is hoped they will continue to do so. Nevertheless, an ex-General recently was involved in an armed attempt, and such clandestine activities can grow.

The Chilean experiment is important not only to Chile but to all revolutionary democratic socialists throughout the world. Here is a Government trying to institute socialism through constitutional means. Allende and Popular Unity wish to create a genuinely democratic socialist society. They must be supported by all left-wing socialists. One day I would hope that in Britain we could have a

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Labour Government with just as radical a programme. If we do have such a government we will be faced with the same problems.

The CIA are active, as are other reactionary forces. For our part, we must explain what Popular Unity stands for, and give it our full and unqualified support. If it fails in Chile, it will be a bad day for socialism everywhere.

May Day Greetings of Friendship and Solidarity from the

SOUTH WALES MINERS

In greeting fellow Trade Unionists we pledge our Area to help to rid Britain of the Tory menace

GLYN WILLIAMS - President
EMLYN WILLIAMS - Vice-President
DAVID FRANCIS - General Secretary

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE AMALGAMATED UNION OF ENGINEERING WORKERS (Constructional Section)

extends fraternal greetings to all workers throughout the world on this May Day 1972

For a defeat of the attacks on the Trade Unions
End the war in Vietnam
For peace and socialist advance

G. GARBETT, President
E. MARSDEN, General Secretary

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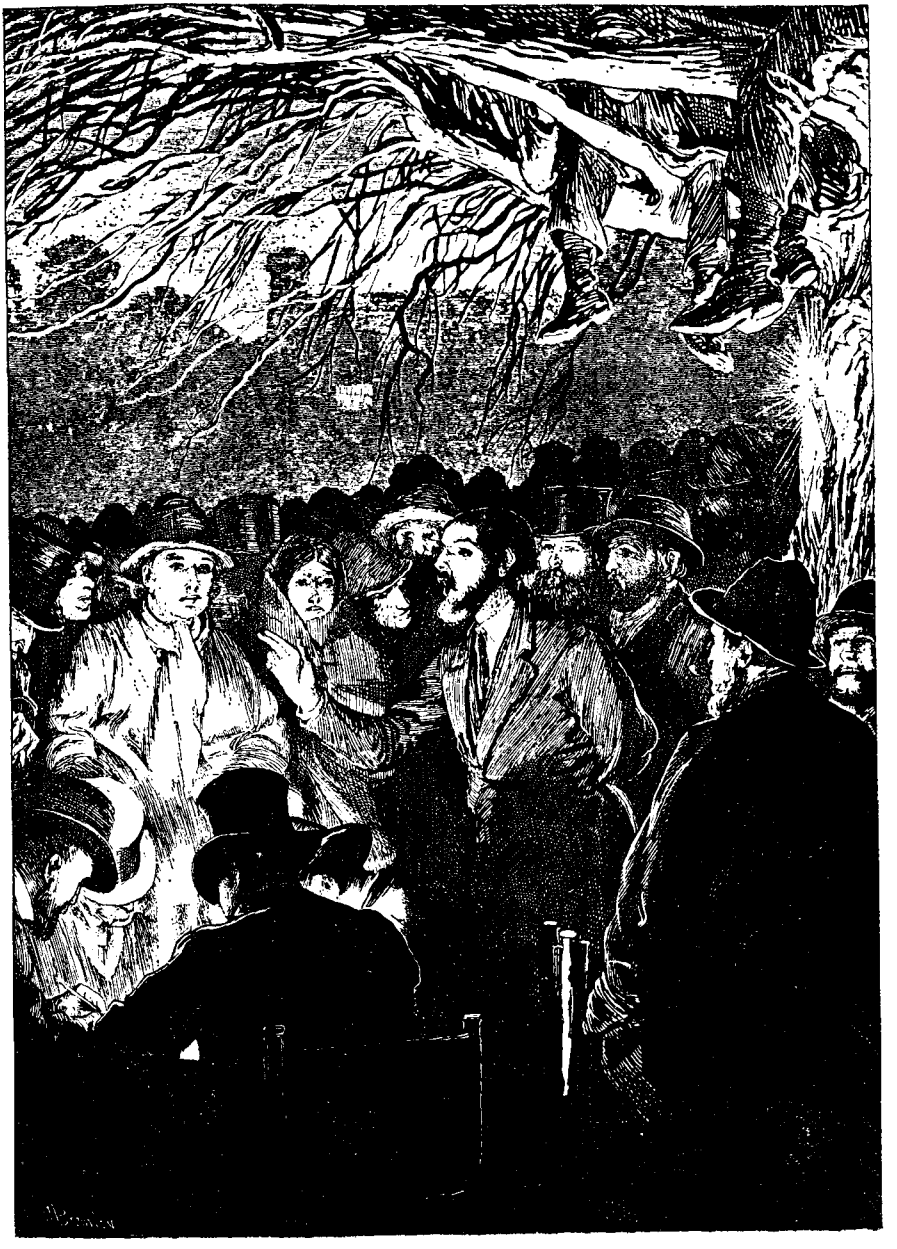

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A UNION

The *Graphic* illustrated paper of April 13, 1872, carried this picture of a night meeting of farm labourers at Wellesbourne, Warwickshire, during the time of the agricultural workers' strike which led up to the formation of the Joseph Arch Labourers' Union, a forerunner of today's National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers. Joan Maynard quotes from the *Graphic*, whose artist also reported the meeting, in her article on page 219.

Below is an interior of a cottage at Wellesbourne.

We are grateful to James Klugmann for permission to reproduce these from his collection of prints and pictures of radical and working class history.

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Tribune

the leading socialist weekly

sends fraternal greetings to all socialists and trade unionists throughout the world.
For socialism, peace and freedom.

TRIBUNE
24 St. John Street
London, E.C.1

We send fraternal May Day greetings to all members of our movement.

We renew our pledge to continue the fight to maintain and advance our members' wages and general standards, for the right to work, and to wipe the Industrial Relations Act off the Statute Book.

Technical and Supervisory Section of the A.U.E.W.

G. H. Doughty
General Secretary

M. J. Cooley
President

On this May Day of 1972 the Executive Council of the

AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF BOILERMAKERS, SHIPWRIGHTS, BLACKSMITHS AND STRUCTURAL WORKERS

on behalf of its members sends greetings to trade unionists everywhere

Daniel McGarvey
President

NATIONAL UNION OF MINEWORKERS (KENT AREA)

EXTENDS MAY DAY GREETINGS TO ALL IN THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM OF TRADE UNIONS AND A SOCIALIST BRITAIN

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FARM WORKERS CELEBRATE JOSEPH ARCH CENTENARY

Joan Maynard *
Vice-President
National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers

ALL workers have serious problems under capitalism, but no workers have been oppressed for as long a period as farm workers. Because of the feudal conditions they have lived under, and still live under, because of the tied cottage system, they have often shown their opposition by leaving the land. In fact, the Joseph Arch Labourers' Union encouraged emigration.

A quote from the *Graphic* of April 13, 1872, shows, however, that there was resentment to emigration, there was hunger for the land they had been robbed of by the Enclosure Acts, and shows finally their understanding of the true position in class society. Here is the *Graphic*'s report of an old man of Wellesbourne at a meeting of Warwickshire labourers presided over by Joseph Arch:

> 'It is a downright disgrace to the country, sir, to drive her sons away. Why don't the Parliament make the landowners let us small bits of land, two or three acres? It would keep us out of the workhouse when we get old.' When our artist† suggested that it was a very difficult thing for our Legislature to interfere in the matter, he smiled grimly, and said, 'Of course they won't. They're all rich men, and like to tread on the poor. Keep 'em down, says they. I know it, sir, I know it.'

Resentment still smoulders in the countryside, resentment against low wages and the tied cottage in particular. We hear a lot about the good relations in agriculture—from the farmers. What they mean is: 'We know how to keep them quiet on low wages with the tied cottage system; we know how to dole out paternalism and play on their love of the land and their feeling for the animals.' Farmers cannot think of the normal employer-worker relationship. They have to own the man through the cottage system.

Under the apparently calm surface the resentment, and sometimes bitterness, is still there so far as the workers are concerned. They still show it mainly by marching out of the industry in thousands, and the industry has been able to take it because of the mechanisation

* Joan Maynard writes here in her individual capacity.

† This refers to the artist whose picture of the meeting we reproduce on p. 216—Ed. *LM*.

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of agriculture on a large scale. They have seldom turned to fight as a corporate body, though individual men have fought and won. I am thinking of a wonderful comrade in my own North Riding of Yorkshire—Jack Bowen—who was sacked for being a branch secretary for our Union. He could not get work, but he stubbornly refused to live in a tied house. He and his wife, another fighter, would not bend the knee. He won through. At eighty years of age he is still a branch secretary of a branch seventy strong. He has been made a life member of the Union and he is the proud owner of the Union's gold medal.

The 1923 strike was successful in stopping wages going down any further. They were already at starvation level. There have also been sporadic local strikes throughout our history, but it has never been easy for the farm workers to take industrial action, for many obvious reasons. They are scattered and work mainly in ones and twos. They have a close relationship with the boss which does not exist in industry. They often work side by side with their employer, who is not someone remote as in a factory of three thousand employees. The tied cottage system discourages militancy. After all, if you know that when you lose your job you lose your home, that is a powerful deterrent to any man.

However, despite all these difficulties there is a stirring in the industry such as there has not been before. It has been building up over recent years, and the rejection of our resubmitted wage claim for £18, forty hours and the five-day week last February was the last straw. To say the least, the claim was modest, for, as we know, everybody below £20 a week is on the poverty line.

Farm workers got an increase of £1.40 in January of this year, bringing the rate up to £16.20 for forty-two hours. The £1.40 did not even recoup the cost of living increase, so that is why we immediately resubmitted the claim. From many parts of the country, calls for strike action have come—from Norfolk, Essex, Lancashire Cumberland, Westmoreland, Yorkshire. In particular, the younger men are not prepared to put up with what men did in the past. Skilled cowmen are in short supply, and most of the men in tied cottages would be out of the industry tomorrow for higher wages if they were not tied to this low-wage industry by the cottage system. Once lured into the cottage system by the seemingly low rent of 50p a week, it is impossible to get out except through the courts, when, if you are lucky, you will get a Council house. In case any reader thinks tied cottage rents are low, let me point out that the gap between the average earnings in agriculture and the average

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earnings in industry is £10.50 a week. This is the real rent of the tied cottage, for were it not for the cottage tying the man to the industry farmers would have to pay the rate for the job—in other words, compete in the open market for labour as most other employers have to do.

When we break out of the tied cottage bondage, as we surely will, then we will smash the wages barrier and win a realistic wage for farm workers. The two key issues for farm workers are tied cottages and wages. They are inexorably linked.

Our members are beginning to understand they will never win the wage they are entitled to through the Wages Board in London. Its rejection of our modest claim for £18 for a forty-hour five-day week, last February, drives home with some force the message that it is no good having a just case and a good production record. Only strength counts, and even strength has to be used with skill and imagination. The miners were a shining example of this—strength, solidarity, skill and imagination in using their strength.

We urgently need to increase our membership, and we are most likely to do this when we are involved in struggle for our members. Should we keep the Wages Board? I think there is still a case for keeping it for the basic rate in the industry, but county wages committees should be given power to negotiate higher wages in their county. This would give a direct incentive to members to join our Union, for they would see us actually producing the goods. The difficulty now is that the Board in London is remote, and because our wages are enforceable by law it gives the impression that it is the Ministry which does the job, not the Union. Furthermore, individual members are able, through the law of supply and demand, to negotiate better rates for themselves than we can with the Board. This makes it difficult to get these men into the Union. We should take over these local negotiations and do the job for the men.

We must encourage discussion throughout our Union to determine what action we can take, when to put pressure on, and where that pressure will hurt most. The miners taught us that you do not just have to stop the product leaving your place of work, but you must stop it reaching its destination. We should be considering now picketing dairies, creameries and slaughterhouses, seeking the aid of other unions like the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers who distribute food, like the Transport and General Workers' Union whose members bring the milk to the dairies, to the creameries, and deliver to the fatstock marts and the slaughterhouses. Just over two years ago the farmers themselves were with-

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holding livestock from the marts. They cannot blame farm workers for taking militant action. We should appeal to the dockers to stop unloading food supplies, for they unload the other half of Britain's food not produced by our farm workers.

The miners virtually stopped the country in seven or eight weeks. Coal is vital, food even more vital. Let no one think farm workers are not stirring down on the farm, for they are. They are the salt of the earth, but they need encouragement: for so long have they slumbered and been told they cannot do anything, that they have almost come to believe it—almost, but not quite. The miners proved beyond doubt that the workers are the most important people in the country. Farm workers are key workers: the descendants of Joseph Arch are preparing to fight back. Times have changed. There is no longer an abundance of labour: there is a shortage of some skilled men. Farm workers are the last people to want to strike, but they are being driven to it by the eighteenth-century attitude of the employers on wages, hours, the five-day week and tied cottages.

We celebrate the Joseph Arch centenary with the spirit of militancy growing in our union, and with the determination and the will to win. 'They conquer who believe they can.'

SOCIETY OF GRAPHICAL AND ALLIED TRADES

FRATERNAL GREETINGS ON MAY DAY TO ALL TRADE UNIONISTS EVERYWHERE

THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

Marxist-Leninist quarterly journal of the African revolution published by the South African Communist Party

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RAIL WORKSHOPS

Sidney Weighell
Assistant General Secretary
National Union of Railwaymen

LESS than ten years ago, 100,000 men and women were employed in 28 main railway workshops and at outstations and depots situated in the regions. Today the number is in the region of 50,000 workshop staff engaged in the railway industry. Works which have closed completely are Inverurie, Cowlairs, Walkergate, Gorton, Faverdale, Darlington, Earlestown, Bromsgrove, Caerphilly, Stratford and Lancing. This run down in staff, which has been matched in no other large industry in this country, has taken place with no major upsets, which says a great deal for industrial relations in the industry. There has been a wholesale streamlining of shops and introduction of new methods. The majority of main works have now gone over to work study, and British Rail Engineering Limited (BREL) must be one of the most efficient production units.

Two pay and efficiency agreements have been concluded for railway shopmen. The first, in May 1969, laid the foundation for the complete introduction of work study schemes based on work measurement. Versatility and flexibility arrangements were also included for craftsmen and other staff, and the multiplicity of grades were assimilated into four new categories only. The second stage of the agreement was introduced in September 1969.

In 1971 the British Railways Board (BRB) published its Corporate Plan for the future which indicated a stabilisation of the work force; in BREL the overall workload was expected to remain constant between 1970 and 1975.

In April 1971, and three months later in July, reductions of 832 and 634 men were proposed arising from withdrawals of locomotives and rolling stock. These were met, as a result of joint consultation and negotiation, by volunteers within the redundancy arrangements. When, however, the announcement was made in September of a complete review of the Corporate Plan forecasts arising from the effects of the economic recession, this was completely unacceptable to the trade unions and the staff. Reductions in manpower requirements of 2,300 in 1972 and 5,500 by 1976 were given, and subsequently proposals were presented to close two main works—Barassie and Ashford—and the locomotive activity at Swindon.

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The trade unions have vigorously challenged the provision which has been made for rolling stock to carry traffic forecasts and locomotive power to haul the trains. We are confident that the provision which has been made to meet the industrial resurgence which we all trust will soon occur leaves insufficient margin. The BRB say that they see no sign of things picking up and do not accept the optimistic forecast being made by the Government. We are entitled to assume that the Government is right and that therefore the BRB will be out in their provision of facilities.

To what extent can the BRB be held to be completely responsible for any inadequacies? When challenged on the size of the new construction of locomotives and rolling stock the unions have constantly been reminded by the BRB of the cash flow problem and the general inability of the Board to finance sufficient capital expenditure. The Board has been hard hit by the economic recession especially in coal and steel traffic.

We cannot accept the requirement to prune the workshop capacity to accord with a financial crisis which the BRB are facing as the solution to meet a short term problem: men to lose their employment to balance the books, the industry to be run down because of lack of adequate capital resources.

The Government have stated that an accelerated investment programme for the public sector is a commonsense answer to a particular emergency at the moment—an untenable unemployment figure left over from the economic depression of the last few months. An injection of new capital for the building of additional rolling stock would in itself be a stimulus to both the public and private sectors. There would be an immediate spin-off to private industry who supply the materials and component parts.

The main line fleet is to be reduced by 12 per cent by 1976, the shunting fleet by 19 per cent. We shall be left with only 2,734 main line and 1,050 shunting locomotives. In this time of economic depression the BRB have drastically pruned their fleet and produce the argument in support that the traffic—at the moment—shows that their forecasts are correct.

It has been forcibly pointed out to the Board that a smaller fleet presupposes that there will be more economical and intensive use of those locomotives available with quicker turn-around and higher mileage and speeds. It is imperative, therefore, to provide that there is adequate replacement of new locomotives within the building programme to ensure that the remaining fleet is of the highest quality and performance. Only two locomotives are due to be

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constructed in 1972. The whole programme should be drastically expanded by bringing forward some element of new build into 1972 and increasing the number of locomotives to be constructed in 1973-75.

The wagon fleet is to be slashed by 42 per cent. Today there are 299,417 wagons; by 1976 this will be down to a mere 173,920. Only 100 of the 14,100 open wagons, which will be available for traffic in 1976 can in any way be considered new. Only 750 of the 24,610 covered wagons will be new. Only about 6 per cent of the 1976 fleet will be of new design or construction. This is a totally inadequate provision for future traffic.

In the Corporate Plan the *necessary measures* in relation to the freight business included the construction of some 9,000 new air-braked wagons and modifications to some 55,000 existing wagons to enable them to run at higher speeds. Both these necessary measures have suffered severe curtailment in the building programme for 1971-76. Only 4,500 of the new wagons have been built or are proposed to be built and none of the modifications is to be undertaken.

Here lies the real hub of the severe redundancy problem. The run-down of the wagon fleet was to be offset by new wagon build. The estimated expenditure was stated in the Corporate Plan to be £40 million for the 9,000 new wagons, and £20 million for the modifications. Where has this gone? We are asking for the inclusion of the 4,500 new wagons in the five year building programme and a bringing forward of the wagon building programme which would mean work for 300 men.

In the Corporate Plan it was stated that something over £100 million a year on average was required to be invested in the railway business during the five years to 1976. We understand that it was expected that this would be met from internal sources to the extent of two-thirds, the remainder from borrowing. New investment in wagons would be an increase in the national assets and there is every justification at this time of financial crisis for the BRB, and in the light of the national unemployment situation, for the cash to cover the proposed new build to be a charge upon the exchequer.

No decision in this matter should be thwarted by financial considerations, and in the national interest something must be done to enable the BRB to keep its capital investment at the necessary level.

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NORTHERN IRELAND

Betty Sinclair

'NORTHERN Ireland cannot win this struggle alone.' So stated Mr Brian Faulkner on the opening of what may prove to be the last ever session of the Unionist-Stormont parliament on October 5, 1971. Faulkner told his 900-strong Ulster Unionist Council that he was going to London for talks with Mr Heath and senior Ministers to 'form a common view of the situation [in Northern Ireland] and work together by agreed means to the vital end of restoring peace and stability.' On March 30, 1972, Northern Ireland came under direct rule from Westminster with the passing of the Northern Ireland (Temporary Provisions) Act, and the Stormont administration was sent packing. The Act prorogues the Northern Ireland parliament until February 1973, but no one doubts that this is forever. Faulkner was the man who told the Stormont parliament in the autumn of 1971, when he presented his Green Paper for 'reform':

> Our task is nothing less than to overhaul our whole machinery of government and make it serve the interests of a changing Ulster and—I hope and pray—an Ulster which even yet may come to put *a true value* upon this parliament and use it in a new unity to achieve those things we all want to see. (My italics—B.S.)

Evidently Faulkner did not pray hard enough, or to the wrong gods, and the 'true value' he put on the Stormont parliament was not accepted either by the anti-Unionist opposition at home or his imperial masters in Britain.

So, for the first time in 52 years, the Unionist Party has been deprived of its overlordship in Northern Ireland. It has been deprived of its ability to command in the corridors of power, make and use laws against its political opponents and to use (legally) para-military might to force its opponents—and those within its own ranks—to accept or submit to Unionist rule. In his last, and fateful, discussions with Heath and his Ministers, Faulkner made it clear that he could accept most of the proposals of the former's Government. He could not accept the total transfer of security powers—'they could not be shared'—as Stormont without security powers 'had no meaning.' Thus, in a few words, the real foundation of Unionist rule was revealed. Further, there could be no agreement

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on the transfer of control of the courts and judiciary. These had been an additional weapon of the Unionists to maintain political control, and they trusted no one to operate them to their satisfaction.

But the child that had been born in 1920, the Northern Ireland state, became too much of a liability to the parent, British imperialism, and an attempt had to be made to end the problems created by the deformity now beyond middle-age: problems that affected the international reputation of the British Conservative Government and were 'divisive in Northern Ireland politics'. The plans to enter the Common Market, with the Irish Republic—and so gain firmer control over the whole of Ireland in the interests of British monopoly capital—could not be upset by unruly subordinates whose only usefulness in helping to maintain a grip over Ireland had outlived the times and become an embarrassment, at home and abroad. The 'last resort' had to be resorted to—direct rule.

The reaction of those who supported Unionism was swift—but not too sure. Wm. Craig, now pledged to restore an even-stronger Stormont, aided by the Loyalist Workers' Association, called a two-day strike for March 27 and 28. Industry and commerce were paralysed—with the help of much intimidation. The Union Jack —'the dear old flag we fight for'—was pulled down at Belfast's City Hall and the 'Ulster' flag run up. At the Stormont rally on March 28, where thousands of workers had marched from the city, Faulkner stole a march on Craig, addressed the assembled workers, emptied his bile against Westminster but stated there should be no further disruption of industry. (He is a very wealthy man and concerned about such things!) Craig spoke and had little of his Vanguard movement plans to reveal and, like the Duke of York, 'he marched them down again' from Stormont Hill.

What are the issues now? Has direct rule solved the problems? Is the Heath 'initiative' such as the progressive forces have been looking for for so long? Opposition to direct rule has always come from the Communist Party of Ireland, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, the official Republican movement and the vast mass of Unionist supporters. Heath's proposal to 'phase out' internment is not acceptable, only delays the possibility of constructive discussion, and places the 800 men now interned in the unenviable position of hostages. The anti-Unionists have no desire to replace Orange-Unionist law with White-Law. Neither do they think that the British people, and especially the trade union and labour movement, will relish the Heath Government administering repressive

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laws in one part of the United Kingdom which could become accepted laws for the rest of the Kingdom.

No one can but see that direct rule is the negation of democracy. But forces within the Unionist Party wish to move even further away from the democratic perspective and are now advocating complete integration within the UK. In this camp are to be found Mr Paisley and, veering in that direction, Mr Faulkner. This is not because they have become more fervent 'British patriots'—they have not. It is because the former visualises himself playing a bigger role on a bigger stage: even Lord Craigavon, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland from 1921 to 1941—premierships were for ever in those days of docility—often hinted that he found Stormont 'both small and parochial'. What is worrying the men of substance, like Faulkner, is that Craigavon is also said to have prophesied that 'one day Northern Ireland would come to an end, and it would do so when the Protestants started fighting the British.'

There can be little doubt that those who have supported Unionism and the British Conservatives feel that they have been betrayed by both. The men who gathered at Stormont on March 28 expected a call to action in order to prevent direct rule being imposed. They wanted to act for the right policy but for the wrong reasons. Lenin was correct when he stated that 'man's actions are often in advance of his thinking.' Here we had an excellent example of that wise opinion of Lenin and one that sent shivers up and down the backs of the Unionist lackeys of monopoly capitalism—not least the very wealthy Faulkner and the Confederation of British Industry which controls 80 per cent of the industrial and economic life of Northern Ireland. What, they murmured, if the anti-Unionist forces, including the progressive Republicans, became united with this latent anti-Britishism of the Protestant working class masses? Would it lead to a conjoining of forces in which the Northern Irish would fight together for freedom and independence from Westminster rule and realise that they could only look for their salvation within Ireland and with the rest of the Irish people? After the betrayal, what? The UDI policy of Craig has been discounted. The men of substance will be driven towards complete integration. This will not be acceptable to the majority of all the citizens of Northern Ireland, Unionist and anti-Unionist, and the fears of where that thinking might lead are kept for select company and shrouded in words not immediately intelligible to the ordinary people.

The *Belfast News Letter*, journal of the Unionist ultra-right, in a sombre editorial on April 6, examined the proposal of complete

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integration and said: '. . . it seems difficult to reconcile anything of the kind with the wishes of either of the two communities here. And any move in that direction is fraught with complexities and uncertainties which do not seem to be fully appreciated.' The Editor stated that the 'vast majority' of Protestants and Unionists are looking for leadership to Faulkner, Craig and Paisley, and expressed the fear that: '. . . while there is divided counsel at the top, while Unionist thinking on means—not on ends—is being channelled in three directions the unity which Mr Faulkner has warned must be maintained is at risk.' Leadership, we were told, must be single-minded, confident, determined and active.

Now all the former rulers, or misrulers, have been thrust out and they will not take kindly to their British masters. Already, having no hope of 'receiving a call', they have made it known that, whilst they may talk to Whitelaw, they will have nothing to do with the London hand-picked Commission. This political crisis, which is now very much the property of the British people, comes at a time when the economic life of the area is sagging. Unemployment is increasing and is hitting even those areas where the Unionists have had most support; in the other areas it goes from bad to worse. Emigration (15,500 last year) is making great inroads amongst professional and skilled Protestants. Housing is a very big headache with over 100,000 unfit dwellings still to be replaced—30,000 of them in Belfast alone. Uncertainties of employment still haunt tens of thousands of workers in the shipbuilding and ship repair, computer, aircraft and textile industries. The mass of the farmers—mostly small and medium holders—are fearful and resentful of being pushed into the Common Market. The campaign of civil disobedience among the anti-Unionists is to go ahead until the last internee is released, and Craig's Vanguard movement threatens a similar campaign until a 'stronger then ever Stormont' is won. Undoubtedly, Heath and Whitelaw will not be able to complain that 'time is long on their hands!'

The questions asked by all progressives in Northern Ireland are: Will Whitelaw mean a continuation of repression? Will the statute book be cleaned up? Will the internees be released soon? Will the political prisoners, Catholic and Protestant, be released? Will the British Army be still used against the anti-Unionists, using military might and the Special Powers Act? Will a Bill of Rights be passed at Westminster to provide the means by which democratic life can be born and Irishmen and women be permitted to discuss what is best for them in the whole of their country and establish

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legal organisations to do just this? Much is being said these days about a 'truce' in which, contrary to military and political logistics, there appears to be only one side instead of two to agree to such a truce. Undoubtedly, the people want peace as do all the anti-Unionist forces. They are against the indiscriminate bombings that have taken place whilst all agree that the attacked have the right to defend themselves against the attackers—no matter who they are, including the British Army. This means that British policy towards Northern Ireland will have to be spelled out and will have to differ completely to that of the former Unionist administration. Unless this is done, the British people will be more and more dragged into unsavoury adventures of British imperialism in Ireland. There is now no fear left in the people of Northern Ireland who set out on the road of democratic reform in 1968—there is only hope and determination that right will succeed. And that they will succeed with the aid and understanding of the British working class and its allies.

SOVIET TRADE UNIONISM

Peter Tempest

THE world we live in is witnessing social and political advances of historic significance. The Soviet Union today is not only in itself a power to be reckoned with but, together with the community of fraternal socialist states, is determining the main course of social development, exerting an immense revolutionary influence on the world working class movement. That is why the fifteenth Soviet Trade Union Congress, which met in Moscow from March 20 to 24, was an occasion of international importance as well as a major event in the life of the USSR.

Almost 5,000 delegates representing a trade union movement 98 million strong gathered in the Kremlin's magnificent Palace of Congresses. They met to discuss their current economic and social tasks, to show their earnest desire for unity of the world trade union movement. A record number of 137 fraternal delegations came from 103 countries, as well as representatives of nine international organisations.

For the first time delegations came from three international organisations—the Pan-African Workers' Congress, the Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unions, and the Latin-American Trade Union Centre of Workers. The national trade union centres of

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West Germany, New Zealand, Iceland, Malta, Tunisia, the Philippines, Luxembourg, San Marino, Laos, the Cameroons, Hongkong and Singapore sent fraternal delegates for the first time to Moscow. Making its first appearance at a major international gathering was a national trade union delegation from newly independent Bangladesh.

The representation of many unions affiliated to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) was warmly welcomed as confirming progress toward restoring unity in action of the world trade union movement. 'This is a difficult task—but a start has been made and that's the main thing,' Alexander Shelepin, President of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (ACCTU) told Congress in his report. Of the 260 million in the world movement today, he pointed out, 154 million are in the rapidly growing unions affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions and about 50 million in ICFTU-affiliated unions. 'Ideological differences,' he said, 'cannot be an obstacle to collaboration between the unions of different orientation, because the aim of their activities is the same—defending the vital interests of working people.'

Referring to traditional links with British unions, he recalled the good work for bilateral relations and international co-operation done by the wartime Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee. 'We are also today willing to co-operate actively with the working class and trade unions of Britain,' said Shelepin. Unity was a recurring theme of both Soviet and fraternal speeches. Alex Kitson, leading the Scottish TUC delegation, conveyed the thanks of UCS workers 'for the great assistance given to them by the Soviet workers, not only for the messages of solidarity but also for the great financial assistance that helped to carry on the fight.'

Jim Cox, President of the Irish TUC, said Irish workers would feel strengthened by Soviet support 'in our efforts to prove to the politicians that there is no greater power than a united trade union movement.' Of the three emergency resolutions which Congress unanimously adopted, one was on Northern Ireland, demanding 'an end to the use of the armed forces, the immediate release of all political prisoners and internees and the taking of measures to satisfy the just demands of the people of Northern Ireland.' The other two resolutions called on workers in all countries to halt US aggression in Indo-China and urged a peaceful settlement in the Middle East.

Bangladesh trade union leader Chowdjury Harun spoke for all the guest delegates when he told Congress: 'You have set up a

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social system that is an inspiration to the working people of the entire world, a source of strength for all fighting for peace, democracy and social progress.'

The assembly of 5,000 delegates (forty per cent of them women) in the Kremlin hall was in itself an inspiring sight. Here were veterans of socialist industry—among them the legendary miner Stakhanov, still active in the Donbas—and younger generations of productivity pace-setters, such as Leningrad engineering worker Kozlov, whose team does its five-day task in four. Here from Ivanovo was young spinner Shmarova, a Russian Federation MP: her mill, one of the oldest in the country, has the highest productivity in the USSR.

The trade union movement of which they are members continues to grow rapidly as the Soviet economy advances. At its first congress in January 1918 it numbered four million members, then 24 million in 1937, 68 million in 1963 and 98 million today. Core of the movement are the 65 million industrial workers. A further three million are at collective farms, where union strength is increasing as farm work becomes more technical. Over a quarter—27 million—of total trade union membership are workers in the fields of science, education, health and culture. All sections of the movement were fully represented at Congress.

This was a delegate gathering of the Soviet Union's ruling class. They spoke for all who by exerting their energy, skills and intelligence are doubling their country's wealth every ten years, raising the living standards of all by leaps and bounds. For them the plans to advance to communism take the material form of specific targets, in the current five-year plan to raise annual production of electricity to a trillion kilowatt hours, of coal to 695 million tons, of oil to 496 million tons and of steel to almost 150 million tons. They are proud to have rehoused 110 million people over the past ten years and are now in the process of providing better housing for 60 million people by 1975.

These grandiose projects, requiring effort and time to fulfil, imperatively need a peaceful world. Peace was the ever-present concern of delegates. It was the main theme of Leonid Brezhnev's important foreign policy statement at the Congress. It is regrettable that no British TUC delegation was there to hear Brezhnev's tribute to the British miners' victory and to hear the loud and long applause when he said the Soviet Communist Party and all Soviet workers stand solid with the struggle of their class brothers, and 'to them we send our militant proletarian greetings.'

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CORRESPONDENCE:

Conversations with Allende

IN THE COURSE of his review of the above book (*LM*, April 1972), Allen Silverstone charges the French Marxist Régis Debray, of being indirectly responsible for the deaths of revolutionaries in Latin America. This is a very grave charge which no one has the right to make unless he can produce very hard evidence. Allen Silverstone mentions Hugo Blanco and Carlos Marighela as examples. He should know both that Hugo Blanco is alive, and that Carlos Marighela supported urban guerrilla warfare, not Debray's theory of the rural foco. Quite apart from this, to suggest that Latin American revolutionaries do not undertake their actions on the basis of their own analyses and assessments is both insulting and inaccurate.

Undoubtedly much can be gained from a critical analysis of Debray's theories. As a model for such an analysis, your readers will recall the article by Joe Slovo, 'Latin America and the Ideas of Régis Debray', in the *African Communist*, No. 33, 1968.

NICHOLAS JACOBS
London N.W.3.

Allen Silverstone replies:

EITHER Nicholas Jacobs misunderstands the point of my criticism of Debray, or else he is trying to disagree. It is undeniable that Debray's 'foco' theory was a reflection on, but also a contribution to, the real problems of a strategy of Latin American revolution (e.g. *New Left Review* 59, or *Socialist Register* 1970, both devote considerable emphasis to the effect Debray's position had in the Latin American movements). Debray's *Revolution in the Revolution* was widely circulated to support one side in the general debate on strategy then in progress. That this position influenced many people, part or *in toto*, in Latin America, the US (Weathermen), Germany (SDS), etc., is also undeniable.

What were some of the points Debray made? (1) Conditions all over Latin America are at the *same* state of ripeness for revolution, and that, in each country, an *identical* strategy could succeed. (2) The urban working class is irrelevant, or even negative, in terms of revolutionary transformation in Latin America (where more than 50 per cent of the population is urban). (3) The guerrilla force should play the vanguard role as 'the party in embryo', superseding, or replacing, established political parties. (4) Links between the guerrilla force and the people are irrelevant if not dangerous to 'security' (sustaining, organic links). (5) One must be young and strong to meet the physical requirements of guerrillahood, and therefore older people have no role to play.

While Marighella rejected point 2, being urban oriented, I believe he adopted the other four points to his and the movement's detriment.

My mention of Hugo Blanco was incorrect, for which I thank Mr Jacobs's note. Blanco, of course, has little to do with a Debrayist position, being connected with the Trotskyist movements of Peru (a trend Debray attacked). I meant to mention Luis de la Puente, also in Peru, in the same region, who adopted Debray's approach almost to the point of caricature . . . and who paid severely for this.

A final point to make is this. One should not minimise the significance of an articulated position in any debate. While Latin American revolutionaries do undertake their actions on the basis of 'their own analyses and assessments', an element in these are

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the positions, strategies, and experiences of other revolutionary movements. Debray's work, either with or without his consent, was labelled as the official analysis of the first successful socialist revolutionary country in Latin America, Cuba. As Pomeroy points out (*Guerrilla Warfare and Marxism*), this is not exactly the case. However, between the assumed imprimatur, and the clarity of the work, it did affect the strategic debate—in a very one-sided manner, and to the detriment of many groups and people who then embraced part or all of this position.

TRUTH WILL OUT

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea sends a regular newsletter to its ratepayers. The latest issue has a boldly displayed box on the front page, headed Planning Policy. It begins:

> As may be expected, the planning policy in the Royal Borough reflects the Council's general policies for the Borough which can be briefly summarised....
>
> 1. To make the northern part of the Borough a fit place to live in.
> 2. To keep the middle and southern part of the Borough a pleasant place to live in.

Or, to put it another way, so long as the blacks in Ladbroke Grove aren't actually sleeping on the pavement, the nice folk in Montpelier Square can continue to enjoy all the amenities that the Royal Borough has provided them with for so long. (*Times*, March 28, 1972)

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BOOKS

Titans and Others
Malcolm Macdonald
Collins, 288 pp., £2.25

NEITHER BIOGRAPHY nor autobiography, in essence this book is just seven essays on important political figures with whom the writer was in contact in the course of his own varied career. They are his own father Ramsay Macdonald, de Valera, Winston Churchill, Nehru, Sukarno, Sihanouk and Kenyatta.

The book is written in clear journalistic—if heavily cliché-ridden—English. There is, for serious tastes, too much travel-brochure description, and too much gossip (we do not need, for example, to be told, and certainly not more than once, how well the writer can walk on his hands). The book makes pleasant light reading, but we are surely entitled to much more than that from one who has held many important and interesting posts. I think that we do get something more, for several of the essays provide material of some value to students of history and of politics.

The first, dealing with the writer's father, is naturally and excusably a defence of his father, who was a curious compound of qualities and defects; it is interesting, but does not tell us anything really new, and is indeed more revealing of the son than of the father.

He takes Eamon de Valera next: they had a good deal to do with one another in and after 1935, when the writer was Dominions Secretary, and he gives interesting accounts of the long negotiations they had together. He liked de Valera, as indeed he liked all his subjects.

He deals with his most important subject, Winston Churchill, in less than forty pages—an achievement in itself—and shows a good understanding of both the good and the bad features of that curious 'Titan'. He is, one is glad to note conscious of some of Churchill's defects as well as of his merits. (He leads me to reflect: with what sort of a ruling class has the remarkable British people landed itself? Winston Churchill was the only really competent politican that ruling class produced in many decades: as its difficulties grew in this century it spent two decades in efforts to destroy him politically, and only just failed; then when it found itself saddled with the second world war, it had no one else of sufficient stature to lead the country, and had to turn to Churchill; and then, when it started to try to get rid of him in the middle of the war, it failed in its intrigues because it still could not find any adequate replacement in its own ranks!)*

The most striking feature of this, the most important of the essays, is the treatment by the writer of the role played by the USSR in the war. He

On behalf of over 30,000 musicians
THE MUSICIANS' UNION
sends May Day greetings to readers of Labour Monthly

* An Australian politician of some quality, who was for a time a member of the war cabinet, told me that on one occasion he asked Churchill why he had decided to become chairman of the Conservative Party, a step which lost him a lot of prestige in Australia; he got the reply: 'If I had not taken the position, to keep my eye on them, they would have had me in the street on my arse within six months!'

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deals fully with the really desperate position into which we were brought by the collapse of France in 1940, and then having to explain how after all, we were not defeated, he attributes the victory to the inspiring but not very constructive or positive assertion of Churchill that 'we would never surrender'. He does not even mention the fact that the USSR came into the war and backed up this assertion of Churchill by saving us from having to consider surrender—which the bulk of the ruling class had wanted—by defeating the Nazis. This tremendous fact is neatly passed over by Macdonald in the words: 'In due course the Nazis were overthrown.'

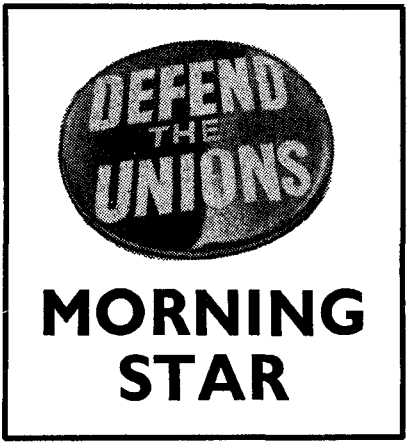
The next essay deals with Sukarno. It is mostly rather light and chatty, but gives an interesting picture of Dutch colonialism, showing how by its very stupidity it actually hastened the complete independence of Indonesia (just as the British hastened that of several African countries).

Then comes Prince Sihanouk; here we get mainly travel-brochure description and gossip, and even sentimentality, but still some material of political value and a good picture of a remarkable man. The opportunity to say something clear and positive about the horrors committed by the US is not taken, but we are told that 'the Vietminh' had '*fallen*' under Communist leadership. It would be nice to see a few other countries fall to such heights!

The next subject of an essay is the late Jawaharlal Nehru. Macdonald deals with him seriously and with great penetration and understanding. The picture he paints is a correct one, and is confirmed by many developments since the essay was written. The only addition to this analysis is an excellent passage, only three-and-a-half pages long, dealing very well with the Suez events of 1956.

The last essay deals with Jomo Kenyatta. It is a good and favourable account of this very remarkable man, and the only complaint one can make of it is that, if the writer had taken the trouble to inform himself of the evidence—and more especially of the lack of evidence—produced against Kenyatta at the Kapenguria trial (which took place long before he went to Kenya), he would have been able to write better and more strongly in favour of Kenyatta; but he still writes well. Inevitably, he reveals much of the appalling stupidity, misjudgments, and wrong actions of many of the European officials who so swiftly and unintentionally helped Kenya to independence, but he praises them for their good manners and 'loyalty' (to whom or to what?).

As I mentioned above, the book is interesting in what it reveals of Macdonald himself. In a long career he held a good many important and varied posts, and has been widely regarded as, certainly, a supporter of the establishment but as an unorthodox and discriminating one; but he shows himself to be more complacently establishmentarian than I would have hoped. He is at any rate very good in his attitude to coloured people and to



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the colour bar generally. That is much in itself, but it is not enough, and for the rest, in addition to such points as the silence over the USSR's contribution to the second world war, we find him praising the Commonwealth to the skies, regarding parliamentary democracy on the British model as the best system of government yet devised, believing that we can achieve socialism by 'gradualism', and holding the true secret of good government is that it should be government by love.

D. N. PRITT

Russia Looks to the Sea
David Fairhall
André Deutsch, 286 pp., £3.95

THOUGH ONE MAY QUARREL with some of the author's findings in detail, it would be fair to recommend this book, both to the expert specialist and to the general reader as a very readable and reasonably objective study and analysis of the development of Soviet sea power, which is one of the more significant developments of the past decade in particular. It deals not only with the military and political aspects of this development; striking evidence of these was furnished during the recent events in Bangladesh and the consequent war between India and Pakistan, when the Soviet 'naval presence' in the Indian Ocean, though relatively insignificant and above all unobtrusive, cancelled out the attempt made by the US to exert pressure on India by introducing a considerable naval force. It deals also with Soviet maritime activity in the fields of commercial shipping, where again it has been on the side of the weak and oppressed countries, of fishery, and of oceanology, where its role is probably the greatest and most ambitious in the world. The general impression conveyed by this comprehensive treatment of the subject is that Soviet development in all these fields is the normal result of the general development of the USSR and should not be regarded as a threat to anyone, as it is so often misrepresented to be by organs of the mass media in the West, and in the speeches and public declarations of Western statesmen and militarists. It is indeed fundamentally defensive.

The author, now Defence Correspondent of the *Guardian*, is an experienced and competent journalist, who learned the Russian language when he was doing his national service, and made good use of it thereafter while working for a firm of economic consultants to the British shipping industry, about the shortcomings and prejudices of which he has no illusions. His knowledge of Russian enabled him, when preparing this book, to make use of material from authoritative Soviet sources, including notably a pamphlet, *The USSR on the World's Sea Routes*, by Vikto Bakayev, a former Minister of the Soviet Merchant Marine, the frank and factual character of which he has obviously welcomed. Thanks to this, he has been able to counterpose the attitude and views of the Soviet authorities to those of their opposite numbers in Britain,

MAY DAY GREETINGS

from the Editor and staff of

SOVIET WEEKLY

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the US and other countries in the West, whose publications are quoted in a valuable Select Bibliography. He has been generally fair-minded in doing this, excepting, perhaps, in relation to the views of the British Admiralty and the Institute of Strategic Studies, to which he shows himself surprisingly gullible, since they are often patently based on obsolete premises about warfare, and inspired by anti-Soviet prejudice—and by professional self-interest.

EDGAR P. YOUNG

The New Radicalism: Anarchist or Marxist?
Gil Green
International Publishers (*Central Books*)
200 pp., £1.20

IN THE FLOOD of 'new left thinking' of all kinds, whether good, bad or indifferent, which characterises the present period of ferment, this study provides an invaluable guide. Beginning with 'The Revolt of Youth' the author analyses the different characteristics of the youth of the nineteen fifties ('the silent generation'), and the sixties ('the young activists rejecting the McCarthy era'). He comes to the present phase when 'everything is questioned and challenged; nothing is accepted at face value' and 'the style of the rebellion' may sometimes appear 'bizarre'. He examines all these manifestations with sympathetic understanding before he proceeds to sort the wheat from the chaff. He distinguishes between the main trend of revolt which represents a serious search for a solution to the problems of present society and the path of action to change it, and thus represents a path of approach which can find its outcome in Marxism, and the alternative trends which seek to express a negative conception of revolt as the assertion of individualism and subjectivism against all forms of society and thus fall into the morass of anarchism. It is not surprising that the more skilled spokesmen of the ruling class today, when the old traditional anti-communism has become discredited, seek to patronise those negative trends and to present their modern tarted-up version of anti-communism in terms of 'libertarian', 'ultra-left' and even 'true Marxist-Leninist' conceptions. All these issues are examined with a remarkable conciseness, and with a wealth of historical background of previous manifestations of these various trends and their class basis, and of the attitude of Marx to these trends. It is a pleasure to see the weapon of Marxism used in the hands of an experienced exponent, not as a bludgeon to smash down deviations from a supposed infallible dogma, but as a flexible and critical instrument which approaches with understanding all the varied manifestations of those seeking their way forward in present problems, and only on the basis of such an approach shows how Marxist experience and theory can help them to find the answers they are seeking.

R.P.D

UCATT

The Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians sends May Day greetings to trade unionists everywhere

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LASTING SERVICE

AN Australian trade unionist asked recently for a reference in *LM* to certain events in Latin America in the thirties; a London reader wrote of his 'great interest in an article in *LM* about 15 years ago on John Osborne and the "Angry Young Men" of theatre and literature.'

People who look for information tend to ask first at their public or specialist library, so the number of enquiries we get at *LM*'s office is insignificant compared with the total of times its pages are sought for reference. Indeed, our small staff would be unable to cope with more than a few of these readers' letters: but those few we are delighted to help.

This system of retrieving information from the pages of *LM*'s 53 volumes works better each time another library places the complete set on its shelves. Active trade unionists needing information for a speech or article usually want it today or this week, not in six or eight weeks time—which may happen if the library has to borrow a volume from another branch.

Some unions have sets in their own office libraries or research departments, and more are now seeing the value of this. Our readers can help by suggesting that incomplete sets should be completed, or that their library should take out a subscription and buy earlier volumes from our stock. The money this brings to *LM* goes straight into producing the next issue and the next volume to continue the service to the movement.

Nicola Seyd

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